

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 USIA-06 L-03 /024 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:SPOLANSKY:JLR

APPROVED BY EUR/SOV:SPOLANSKY

CU/EE:WPRYCE

USIA/IEU:DMOXHAY

----- 006362

P 162043Z JAN 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, SCUL, UR, US

SUBJECT: CONTEMPORARY SOVIET FILM SEMINAR IN US

REF: STATE 297186

1. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS MET JANUARY 15 WITH FRED STARR OF THE SMITHSONIAN'S KENNAN INSTITUTE TO DISCUSS IDEAS FOR A POSSIBLE SEMINAR ON CONTEMPORARY SOVIET FILMS WHICH WAS RAISED DURING RECENT EXCHANGE AGREEMENT REVIEW TALKS. STARR REMAINS QUITE INTERESTED IN THE IDEA AND BELIEVES THAT SOMETHING CAN BE DONE THAT WOULD SATISFY THE INSTITUTE'S PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT AND ALSO MEET IN PART THE SOVIET INTEREST IN STIMULATING POSSIBLE SALES OF THEIR FILMS IN US. OUR INITIAL THINKING IS THAT A TWO-DAY SEMINAR WOULD BE HELD AT THE INSTITUTE AT WHICH A NUMBER OF CONTEMPORARY SOVIET FILMS WOULD BE SHOWN. SOVIETS WOULD BE ASKED TO GIVE TITLES OF APPROXIMATELY TWENTY OF THEIR BEST FILMS, WHICH THEY THINK ALSO HAVE COMMERCIAL VALUE, FROM WHICH US SIDE (KENNAN INSTITUTE) WOULD SELECT APPROXIMATELY TEN FOR SHOWING TO A SELECT AUDIENCE OF SPECIALISTS ON SOVIET FILMS, NATIONALLY KNOWN

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FILM CRITICS, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE US FILM PRODUC-

ING AND DISTRIBUTING WORLD. SOVIETS WOULD BE ASKED TO PROVIDE FILMS TO SEMINAR FREE OF CHARGE. INSTITUTE WOULD INVITE SOVIET FILM WORLD REPRESENTATIVES TO PARTICIPATE AT ITS EXPENSE AND ALSO ONE OR TWO SOVEXPORTFILM REPRESENTATIVES TO ATTEND AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE. SEMINAR WOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROFESSIONAL AND COMMERCIAL SPECIALISTS TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL, SPECIFIC INTEREST.

2. WE DISCUSSED POTENTIAL TIMING FOR SUCH A SEMINAR, AND AGREED THAT LATE SPRING OR EARLY AUTUMN WOULD BE GOOD TIMES. STARR PLANS TO TRAVEL TO THE USSR SOMETIME IN MARCH, AND CONCEIVABLY COULD, EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EMBASSY, DISCUSS THE PROJECT WITH APPROPRIATE SOVIETS. HE THINKS THAT FUNDING WILL NOT BE TOO MUCH OF A PROBLEM, AND WE WOULD, OF COURSE, WANT TO GET THIS WORKED OUT BEFORE PROPOSING THE IDEA TO THE SOVIETS. WE WOULD HOPE TO GET IDEA WORKED OUT IN ENOUGH DETAIL TO PRESENT TO SOVIETS IN CONJUNCTION WITH OR IN SUPPORT OF, IF NECESSARY, EMBASSY'S PROPOSAL FOR BICENTENNIAL US FILM RETROSPECTIVE WEEK. THERE IS THOUGHT HERE THAT SUCH FILM WEEKS/SEMINARS COULD BECOME ANNUAL EVENT IN EXCHANGE RELATIONS IF WE CAN GET FIRST ONES OFF THE GROUND.

3. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING IDEA OF SEMINAR WITH MPAA, WHICH COULD BE PARTICIPANT ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT THINK IT IS ESSENTIAL. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS OR IDEAS THE EMBASSY MAY HAVE BEFORE JANUARY 23 MEETING WITH MPAA AND IN CONNECTION WITH OUR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH STARR.

4. FYI. A FESTIVAL OF SOVIET SILENT CLASSIC FILMS WILL BE RUNNING IN THE UNITED STATES FOR TWO MONTHS BEGINNING AT THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE AT THE KENNEDY CENTER IN MARCH 1976. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SEMINAR, FILMS, MOTION PICTURES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE011569  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** SPOLANSKY:JLR  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 STATE 297186  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 05 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 MAY 2004 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CONTEMPORARY SOVIET FILM SEMINAR IN US  
**TAGS:** OEXC, SCUL, UR, US  
**To:** MOSCOW  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006